



## Upcoming courses & events

### Lambing courses

~~Wednesday 3rd February (Sold out!), Wednesday 2nd March (Sold out!) & Friday 4th March, 10:30am @ Wright & Morten Farm & Equine Office, Holly Tree Farm~~

Learn how to safely correct malpresentations (leg back, head back, etc), treat common periparturient diseases in ewes and ensure your lambs get the best start in life. Lunch will be provided. Please phone Hollie (07733 121545) or book in with the office.

### Safe and effective use of veterinary medicines - Cost £40

Wednesday 10th February (sheep & beef & small holders) & Wednesday 9th March (dairy) 11:00am - 2:30pm @ Wright & Morten Farm & Equine Office, Holly Tree Farm

Cost effective use of medicines on your farm – how to get the best value from the products we prescribe to you and avoid unnecessary use. Please phone the office to book a place.

### Calf rearing course

Module 3: Pathogens (part 2) & Weaning – Wednesday 16th March @ Location TBC

We'll be covering scour and pneumonia treatments, common problems at weaning, and analysis of data on growth rates after weaning. Relevant to beef and dairy calves and open to everyone - don't worry if you didn't attend the previous sessions! Lunch will be provided. Please phone the office if you wish to attend.

### AI course

Just a reminder that we're still looking for volunteer venues to host an AI course, who can supply barren cows. Please contact Bridget on 07733 121533 for more information.

## Lab tests on site

Our lab at Holly Tree can provide rapid turnaround results for gutworm, fluke and coccidial egg counts, lungworm larval counts and identification of calf scour pathogens. Please bring us some samples before spending money on treatments that might not be necessary.

## Calf pneumonia

If you have calf deaths from suspected pneumonia, please contact us regarding a new scheme to carry out **FREE post-mortems** and lung tissue sampling

## Staff news

Bridget is recovering well from her second knee replacement op at the end of January. She's trying to remember to take it easy, but we're sure she'll be back in the office before long!

Jenny will be starting her maternity leave this month, so we'll be welcoming back our lovely locum Elaine, who'll be with us for the next couple of months. Best of luck to Jenny and Chris for the new arrival!

## Lungworm vaccination

A reminder that vaccination is still the most cost effective and reliable means of controlling lungworm in young stock. We are taking orders for *Bovilis Huskvac* now - 1st dose needs to be done **at least 6 weeks pre turnout**, with 2nd dose 4 weeks later. Please phone Rachael at Holly Tree with your orders and queries re pricing.



# Neosporosis in Cattle (Part 1)



*Neospora caninum* is a protozoan parasite, which is a major cause of abortion in cattle in the UK and worldwide. It is closely related to *Toxoplasma gondii*, which causes abortion in sheep and humans. However, *Neospora* does not infect humans.

A few studies have looked at the herd-level prevalence of *Neospora* in the UK (the number of herds with one or more animals testing positive):

- One survey found a prevalence of 90% over a 4-year period, with 13% of the 15,700 cattle studied testing positive.
- Another survey found a prevalence of 40% over a six-month period.
- Veterinary laboratories diagnose *Neospora* as the cause of about 20% of abortions.

Neosporosis is estimated to cost the average 121 cow herd £3000 per year, as once a cow is infected she is infected for life! And infection can cause more fertility problems than just the visible abortions.

The lifecycle of *Neospora* is quite complicated (too complicated to fit on one page!). There are two main ways it can infect cattle, which we'll cover in next month's newsletter.



## Take Home Points From The Positive Farmers Conference

Bridget joined several Cheshire farmers attending the Positive Farmers' Conference in Cork in mid-January. Many of the speakers concentrated on the need to farm as efficiently as possible, minimising livestock losses, against the background of the challenge posed to all dairy farmers by low global milk prices.

Successful rearing of heifer calves from birth through to first calving at 2 years old, then keeping heifers in the herd after that (with a target average of 5.5 lactations), is a key influence on dairy farm sustainability, whichever farming system you operate.

Some excellent research has been carried out at Moore Park into different methods of calf rearing and what works best for reducing disease incidence and achieving optimal daily weight gain. For colostrum management, the '1, 2, 3 Rule' is useful to remember - use good quality colostrum from the **1<sup>st</sup>** milking only, feed calf within **2** hours of birth and for a 35 kg calf feed **3** litres (equivalent to 8.5% body weight) - so for a 45kg calf this would be just under 4 litres.

An experiment carried out at Moore Park in Spring 2015 showed that **once calves had received colostrum under the 1, 2, 3 Rule**, they did just as well if moved onto milk replacer immediately rather than being fed on 'transition milk'. This is particularly relevant in a herd where you are targeting control of *Johne's disease*. A calf can be fed colostrum from its mother or an identified low risk cow as a single feed, then moved on to milk replacer or pasteurised whole milk.

High quality milk replacer with a crude protein of 26%, with protein derived from milk rather than vegetable sources, will result in better average daily live weight gain than 20% protein milk. The suggested volume of milk/ milk replacer is 15% of body weight - 6 litres for a 40kg calf - fed split between 2 feeds up to 4 weeks old, then either as a single or 2 feeds.